

2005 Gruber Award Winner

**SFC Craig A. Brown,
HHB/1-319 AFAR,
82nd Abn Div**

Sergeant First Class (SFC) Craig A. Brown, Headquarters Service Battery, 1st Battalion, 319th Airborne Field Artillery Regiment (HHB/1-319 AFAR), 82nd Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, has won the US Army Field Artillery's Gruber Award for the outstanding FA professional of 2005. He is the Regimental Fire Support NCO for the 82nd Division's 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment (PIR).

SFC Brown was instrumental in the 82nd Airborne Division's success during operations supporting Hurricane Katrina Relief in New Orleans, Louisiana. While serving as the 505th PIR Fire Support NCO, his perseverance and in-depth knowledge of effects-based operations helped the 505th execute several complex civil-military and information-based operations throughout the regiment's area of operations (AO) with elements from the Navy, Marines, Air Force, Coast Guard and many government organizations. His detailed effects-based data analysis showing trends and their impact on current and future operations gave the regimental commander the timely and accurate information he needed to evacuate 4,903 displaced Americans from the Orleans Parish area.

His FA battalion commander considers SFC Brown the best NCO in the battalion, "a superstar" performer who will enrich any organization he is a part of. The commander reports he is highly competent, aggressive and dedicated with an exceptional sense of mission accomplishment. SFC Brown always places his men's welfare above his own. By virtue of his leadership traits, he has enhanced all units, community organizations and personnel he has led.

Lead-from-the-front qualities have exemplified SFC Brown's character throughout his career. He has made the commandant's list in every NCO education system (NCOES) school he has attended. In the FA Basic NCO Course (BNCOC), he was selected by his peers to receive the Leadership Award for superior



performance and contributions to the class environment.

SFC Brown has attended some of the toughest schools in the US Army and has graduated with distinction. Ranger School; Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape (SERE); Emergency Medical Technician (EMT); Joint Firepower Controller's Course (JFCC); Naval Gunfire School; and Airborne and Jumpmaster Schools are some of the most notable. As a result, SFC Brown is well grounded in the fundamentals of training, maintaining, leading and caring for Soldiers. He is far ahead of his contemporaries in all areas and enhances the capabilities and readiness of all fire supporters in the 319th AFAR and 82nd Airborne Division.

From 1995 through 2001 while he was in the 1st Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment at Hunter Army Airfield, Savannah, Georgia, SFC Brown's fire support team (FIST) won the Battalion Best FIST Competition every year. In July 1995, the team finished second by one point in the 75th Ranger Regimental Competition. The team won the regimental competition in June 1997 "hands down" due to SFC Brown's enhancement to the team's training methods; personnel and equipment readiness; and superior team *esprit de corps*.

In March 2002, SFC Brown once again demonstrated his leadership and ability to enhance FA readiness and capabilities by aggressively training and preparing his Stryker FIST (1-15 FA) while in Korea. As a result, the team won the Best FIST Competition with one of the largest

margins of victory in recent competition history. The command routinely chose his platoon to execute the battalion's and brigade's high-visibility missions.

After coming to the 82nd Airborne Division in October 2002, SFC Brown served as both the 1-17th Cav and then the 1-82 Avn Fire Support NCO for HHB, 319 AFAR. He deployed to Iraq twice, once with 1-17 Cav and once with the 82nd Avn.

He became 505th PIR's Fire Support NCO as a result of his outstanding combat performance. During his deployments, SFC Brown mentored and developed his junior leaders to improve the lives of Iraqis in his unit's AO and ensured all his Soldiers came home safely.

Throughout 2005, SFC Brown has coached and mentored his fire support subordinates in individual preparations for professional development events. The FIST selected from his platoon placed first in seven of nine events in the 2005 82nd Division Artillery Best FIST Competition. He mentored two Soldiers to pass the Ranger indoctrination program and helped four other Soldiers pass the Special Forces assessment selection process.

SFC Brown has continued to lead by example. He won the 1-319 AFAR NCO of the Year Competition in February 2005 and the 319th AFAR NCO of the Year Competition in March 2005. He was on his way to compete in the 82nd Airborne Division NCO of the Year Competition in May but withdrew to be with his wife when his son was born.

Throughout his career, SFC Brown has excelled technically, tactically and as a leader, using his competence and creativity to improve units and train and care for Soldiers.

The Gruber Award was established in 2002 to recognize outstanding individual thought and innovation that results in significant contributions to or enhancement of the FA's warfighting capabilities, morale, readiness or maintenance. It is named after Brigadier General Edmund L. Gruber, 1879-1941, who, as a First Lieutenant in 1908, composed the Caisson Song that the Army adapted as The Army Goes Rolling Along in 1952.